



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***STATE TO PROVIDE ANTI-GANG ASSISTANCE FOR RURAL COUNTIES
Announces Creation of a New “GITEM” Squad in Douglas Area***

PHOENIX – Governor Janet Napolitano today announced the Arizona Department of Public Safety will help create a new anti-gang squad in Cochise County, and provide additional assistance to Pinal and Coconino counties’ anti-gang efforts. Napolitano made the announcement after a meeting at the Arizona Counter Terrorism Intelligence Center (ACTIC) with DPS management and others.

The officers will help make up a new local Gang Intelligence Team Enforcement Mission (GITEM) squad in Cochise County. The unit will include personnel from Douglas Police and the County Sheriff’s Department, and will soon be fully staffed with ten law enforcement officers.

“GITEM squads work in the true spirit of cooperation between law enforcement agencies,” said Napolitano. “The goal is the same: to break up these gangs and rid them of our communities. The expertise of local, county, state and other agencies is critical to bringing these criminal organizations down.”

Additionally:

- Pinal County will be assigned one more DPS officer and possibly one more sheriff’s deputy. This GITEM squad has personnel from police departments in Coolidge, Eloy, Kearney and Apache Junction.
- Coconino County will be assigned one more DPS officer; currently, there are officers and deputies from DPS, Flagstaff Police and the county sheriff’s department.

GITEM squads are made up of personnel from different agencies in each area of the state, but their focus is the same: to target, disrupt and dismantle gangs and other organized crime groups. While most Arizonans are familiar with street gangs and outlaw motorcycle gangs, GITEM’s work also cracks down on prison-based gangs, drug cartels, drug and human trafficking organizations and other traditional organized crime groups.

Plans are to add 31 DPS officers to GITEM squads statewide by the end of next month, and 41 more by the end of December.

A one-page fact sheet on the Arizona Counter-Terrorism Intelligence Center is included in PDF format.